

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CELEBRATING 100 YEARS 1916-2016



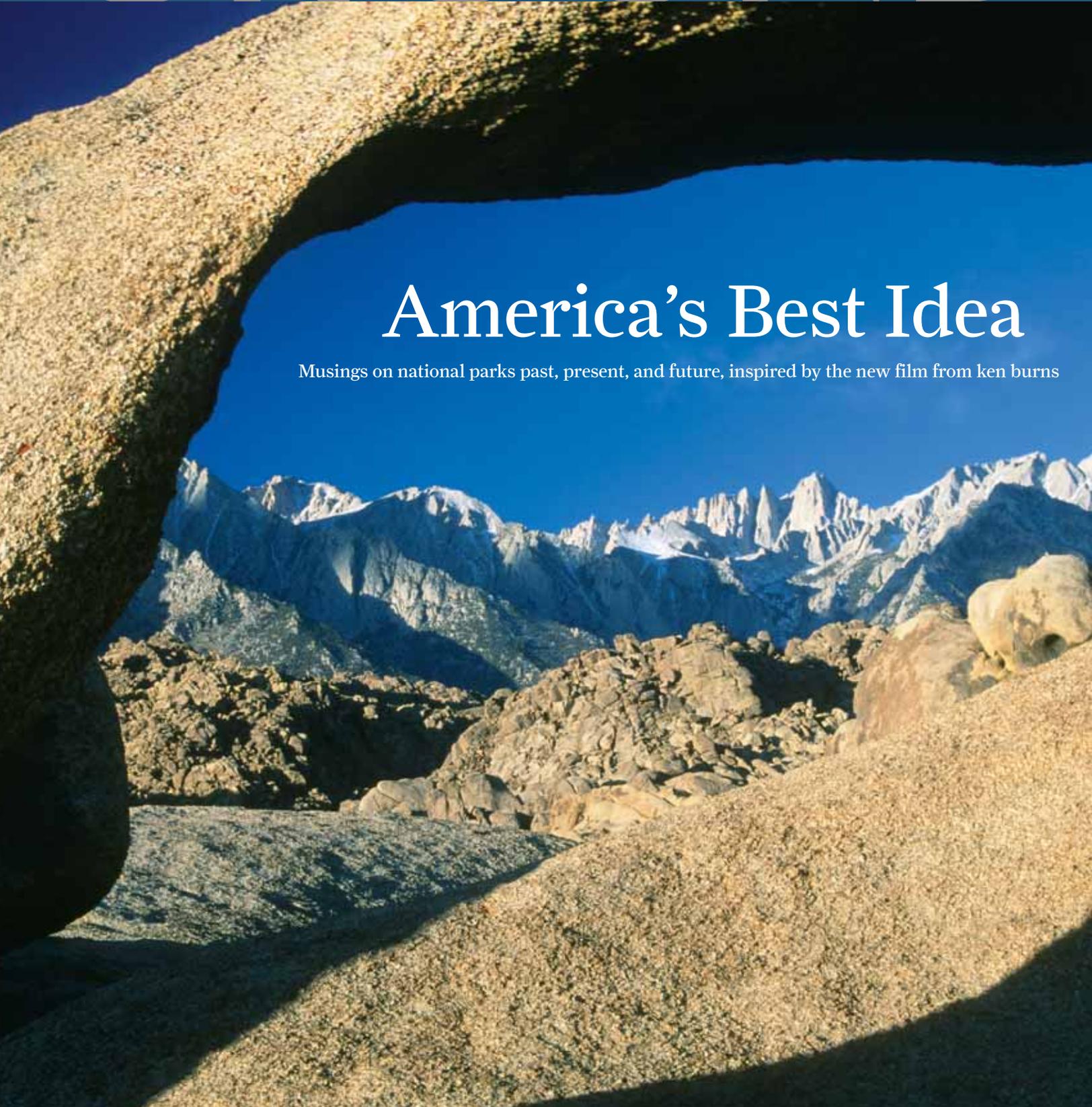
COMMON

PRESERVING OUR NATION'S HERITAGE FALL 2009

# GROUND

## America's Best Idea

Musings on national parks past, present, and future, inspired by the new film from ken burns



# FIRST WORD

BY DOUGLAS BRINKLEY

## Wilderness Warrior

**IN EARLY MARCH 1903, PRESIDENT THEODORE ROOSEVELT** was mired at Capitol Hill trying to push forward an anti-anarchy bill. But when he received a visit from a pair of prominent ornithologists, he nevertheless made time to meet with them. **A NEW “GOLD RUSH,”** which started after the Civil War, had fomented the massacring of wildlife for profit and sport. The glorious bison were nearly exterminated from the Great Plains, and jaguars along the Rio Grande had simply disappeared into the Sierra Madre of Mexico. The situation in Florida was particularly acute. Once deemed a vast swamp of little value, the state was experiencing a boom due to the fashion trendiness of its birds—especially their feathers. As a result, plume hunters poured into the state, guns in hand, determined to bag wading birds for the exotic feathers then in high demand. Roosevelt’s visitors wanted to discuss Pelican Island particularly, a teeming bird rookery in a narrow lagoon off the Atlantic coast. **AFTER LISTENING ATTENTIVELY TO THEIR DESCRIPTION** of Pelican Island’s quandary, and sickened by the update on the plumers’ slaughter, Roosevelt asked, “Is there any law that will prevent me from declaring Pelican Island a federal bird reservation?” The answer was a decided “No;” the island, after all, was federal property. “Very well then,” Roosevelt said with marvelous quickness. “I so declare it.” **WITH THAT ONE SWEEPING “I SO DECLARE IT,”** President Roosevelt, the big game hunter, had entered John Muir’s aesthetic preservation domain. And Pelican Island wasn’t a passing whim of a president showing off to ornithologist colleagues. It was an opening salvo on behalf of the natural environment. **DURING HIS PRESIDENCY, ROOSEVELT QUADRUPLED** America’s forest reserves and, recognizing the need to save the buffalo from extinction, he made Oklahoma’s Wichita National Forest and Montana’s National Bison Range big game preserves. Others were created to protect moose and elk. To cap it off he established five national parks, protecting such “heirlooms” as Oregon’s iridescent blue Crater Lake, South Dakota’s subterranean wonder, Wind Cave, and the Anasazi cliff dwellings at Mesa Verde in Colorado. Courtesy of an executive decree, Roosevelt saved the Grand Canyon—a 1,900-square-mile hallowed site in Arizona—from destructive zinc and copper mining interests. He also instituted the first federal irrigation projects, national monuments, and conservation commissions. **THE DOUGHTY SCRAWL OF HIS SIGNATURE,** a conservationist weapon, set aside a legacy for posterity (or for “the people unborn,” as he put it) of over 230 million acres, almost the size of the Atlantic coast states from Maine to Florida. All told, Roosevelt’s legacy has become almost half the landmass Thomas Jefferson had acquired from France in the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. With the power of the bully pulpit, Roosevelt—re-

peatedly befuddling both market hunters and insatiable developers—issued “I so declare it” orders over and over again. He entered the fray double-barreled, determined to save the American wilderness from deforestation and duress. From the beginning to the end of his presidency, Roosevelt, in fact, did far more for the long-term protection of wilderness than all of his White House predecessors combined. **IN A FUNDAMENTAL WAY,** Roosevelt was a conservation visionary, aware of the pitfalls of hyper-industrialization, fearful that speed-logging, blast-rock mining, overgrazing, reckless hunting, oil drilling, population growth, and all types of pollution would leave the planet in biological peril. “The natural resources of our country,” he warned Congress, “are in danger of exhaustion if we permit the old wasteful methods of exploiting them to continue.” Wildlife protection and forest conservation, Roosevelt insisted, were a moral imperative and represented the high-water mark of his entire tenure at the White House. In an age when industrialism and corporatism were running largely unregu-

**HE ENTERED THE FRAY DOUBLE-BARRELED, DETERMINED TO SAVE THE AMERICAN WILDERNESS FROM DEFORESTATION AND DURESS. FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE END OF HIS PRESIDENCY, ROOSEVELT, IN FACT, DID FAR MORE FOR THE LONG-TERM PROTECTION OF WILDERNESS THAN ALL OF HIS WHITE HOUSE PREDECESSORS COMBINED.**

lated, and dollar determinism was holding favor, Roosevelt, the famous Wall Street trustbuster, went after the “unintelligent butchers” of his day with a ferocity unheard of in a U.S. president. **BY REORIENTING WASHINGTON, DC’S BUREAUCRACY** toward conservation, his crusade to save the American wilderness can now be viewed as one of the greatest presidential initiatives between Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation and Woodrow Wilson’s decision to enter World War I. “There can be nothing in the world more beautiful than the Yosemite, the groves of giant sequoias and redwoods, the Canyon of the Colorado, the Canyon in Yellowstone, the Three Tetons; and our people should see to it that they are preserved for their children and their children’s children forever with their majestic beauty unmarred.” Roosevelt’s stout resoluteness to protect our environment is a strong reminder of our national wilderness heritage, as well as an increasingly urgent call to arms.

Douglas Brinkley is a professor of history at Rice University. Excerpted from his new book, *The Wilderness Warrior: Theodore Roosevelt and the Crusade for America*.



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*Above:* Yellowstone National Park. *Front:* Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park. © Q.T. LUONG/TERRA-GALLERIA.COM *Back:* Burning bus, Anniston, Alabama, May 14, 1961. JOSEPH POSTIGLIONE/COURTESY HIGH MUSEUM OF ART

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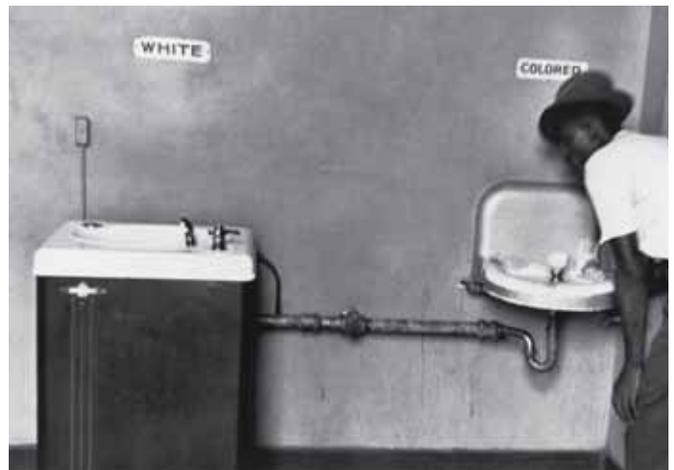
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# Counter Revolution

*Honoring the Civil Rights Movement's Fight for Open Accommodations*

In the heat of the Civil Rights Movement, some of the most dramatic moments were in the most common settings: schools, diners, buses, train terminals—unremarkable places, part of the background of public life. But in the South, what was public for some was not public for others, and the most indelible images from the period came from struggles over where one sat, ate, or waited for the bus. The Freedom Riders of 1961, risking violence at the hands of armed mobs, were attacked in the name of rights today taken for granted. The struggle was fierce because the stakes—basic human dignity—were so high.

At the behest of Congress, the National Park Service recently surveyed places that figured prominently in this part of the civil rights struggle, canvassing for potential national historic landmarks at the actual places where the fight to integrate altered history. The result, *Racial Desegregation of Public Accommodations*, assesses the importance of the surviving sites.



**SOME OF THE MOST DRAMATIC MOMENTS WERE IN THE MOST COMMON SETTINGS: SCHOOLS, DINERS, BUSES, TRAIN TERMINALS—UNREMARKABLE PLACES, PART OF THE BACKGROUND OF PUBLIC LIFE.**

A host of places have already been memorialized as part of the fight to integrate accommodations, including Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site and Preservation District—scene of King's early years and the formation of non-violent protest—and the Lincoln Memorial, where contralto Marian Anderson, barred from Constitution Hall by the Daughters of the American Revolution, sang for 75,000 on Easter Sunday, 1939. The Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, site of the 1963 bombing that killed four girls and spurred the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, has already achieved landmark status as a result of the study. However, many places that were once the battle lines have since been forgotten.

From colonial times to the Civil War, accommodations was primarily an issue in the North, where freed persons of color, though better off than their southern counterparts, remained second class citizens. In 1841, abolitionist Frederick Douglass was removed from a Massachusetts train after refusing to move to the “Jim Crow car.”

**ABOVE:** Fountains, North Carolina, 1950. **RIGHT:** Waitresses pointedly ignore a Saint Augustine College student during a sit-in protest at a counter reserved for white customers, Raleigh, North Carolina, February 10, 1960.

**contact points** **web** *Racial Desegregation of Public Accommodations Study* [www.nps.gov/nhl/themes/Public%20Accom.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/nhl/themes/Public%20Accom.pdf) *National Historic Landmark Theme Studies* [www.nps.gov/nhl/themes/themes.htm](http://www.nps.gov/nhl/themes/themes.htm)

Between 1941 and 1954, the Supreme Court—owing largely to pressure from the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and the U.S. Justice Department—ruled that segregation on trains and buses was unconstitutional. However, some states circumvented the rulings with their own laws, and a 1953 Baton Rouge bus boycott ushered in the era of protests. The study identifies the city's Mount Zion Baptist Church, where boycott meetings were held, as a potential landmark, although its state of preservation is uncertain.

The movement's flowering came with the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision, which rendered public school segregation unconstitutional. The logic was soon extended to public accommodations. Throughout the 1950s, black church leaders organized bus boycotts modeled after the Baton Rouge example. The study notes a number of places figuring in this chapter of the story—among them Trailways stations in Richmond, Virginia, and Birmingham, Alabama—as well as buses where individual acts of courage played out. Many of the stations have been demolished or remodeled, the buses lost to history.

The Greensboro, North Carolina, Woolworth's was the site of a famous 1960 sit-in, part of a wave of demonstrations intending to force integration of lunch counters and restaurants throughout the South. The store has since been remodeled and the counter is now on dis-







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play at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. In Anniston, Alabama, buses no longer roll into the Trailways station where Freedom Riders were attacked in 1961; it has been converted to other uses. But the exterior is still much the same.

The Freedom Riders, black and white, were some of the most effective protesters, with the Kennedy administration having to call out the National Guard to protect them against angry mobs. Civil disobedience, led by figures such as Martin Luther King, Jr., and Ralph Abernathy, played a larger role, with strategies mapped out in various



**LEFT:** Freedom Rider bus with National Guard escort, Montgomery to Jackson, May 24-26, 1961. **ABOVE:** Burning bus, Anniston, Alabama, May 14, 1961.

churches. Among these, Montgomery, Alabama's First Baptist Church is largely intact and could qualify as a national historic landmark. Others, such as Mount Zion Church in Albany, Georgia, while on the National Register of Historic Places, need further research to assess their state of preservation.

The report also discusses discrimination against Asian and Hispanic Americans. Their struggle largely followed a slightly different path from that of African Americans, whose highly visible protests were well-documented and led to major legal decisions. Although the prejudice took similar forms, there have been few accounts dealing exclusively with segregation in public accommodations against these groups, and therefore no potential landmarks identified by the study.

The report is part of a broader effort to identify potential landmarks connected with civil rights, with the National Park Service partnering with the Organization of American Historians to develop an overview of the subject. In addition to the report on public accommodations, two other studies—one covering places associated with voting rights and the other with the desegregation of public schools—have been conducted.

# Framing Nature

*Preserving the Legacy of a Photographer Who Stirred the Nation*

No photographer has elevated wilderness in the public consciousness like Ansel Adams. His images conjure up nature's often inexplicable spirit, depicting wilderness as shrine, ethereal at times, full of silent drama and ambiguous mood. Adams is so well known the mere mention of his name suggests windswept spaces and the Sierra Nevada.

When he died in 1984, a large part of his legacy was already housed at the University of Arizona's Center for Creative Photography. Today, the center houses the definitive Adams archive, with some 2,500 prints, over 40,000 negatives, and the photographer's correspondence, personal papers, and equipment. With a grant from the NPS-administered Save America's Treasures program, the center has established optimum conditions for the collection, ensuring its survival for future generations. The grant—awarded in cooperation with the National Endowment of the Arts, which participates in the program—allowed for the purchase of a large cold storage unit to preserve the negatives and the sink matting of over 2,000 photographs to preserve the original mounts.

**BY THE 1970S, ANSEL ADAMS WAS A LEGEND. "DEAR MR. ADAMS," AN ADMIRER BEGAN HER LETTER. "IN WRITING TO YOU, I ALMOST FEEL THAT I AM WRITING TO JOHN MUIR, OR TO YOSEMITE VALLEY ITSELF."**

While Adams produced some of the most-loved photographs of the American West, he was also an exacting technician who expanded the science behind capturing images on film. And his influence ranged beyond photography. Adams was a force in promoting awareness of conservation when the concept was still relatively young.

Ansel Adams was born in 1902, the son of a successful lumber merchant. He grew up on the heights facing San Francisco Bay, and spent much of his time outdoors, drawn to nature. His father was of similar temperament, and the young Adams—exposed to the ideas of Ralph Waldo Emerson—was instilled with a sense of social responsibility and stewardship of the natural world. His first visit to Yosemite determined the course of his career, "a culmination of experience so intense as to be almost painful," he wrote. "From that day in 1916 my life has been colored and modulated by the great earth gesture of the Sierra." His first images of Yosemite came from that trip, and when he returned to San Francisco he was consumed not only with the valley's



**ABOVE:** Leaves, Glacier National Park, Montana, 1942. **RIGHT:** Manly Beacon, Death Valley National Park, circa 1952.

**contact points** **web** Center for Creative Photography [www.creativephotography.org](http://www.creativephotography.org) Save America's Treasures [www.nps.gov/history/hps/treasures](http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/treasures)

beauty but also with his newfound craft. He got a job as a photo finisher, returning the next year with upgraded equipment. The park was a Mecca for him, with multiple visits honing his technique.

At 17, Adams joined the Sierra Club, taking a summer job as custodian of Yosemite lodge. Over several summers he met some of the most important conservationists, including Stephen T. Mather, first director of the National Park Service. He made increasingly arduous climbs into the Sierra, photographing as he went. Adams was inspired by an "exceedingly pointed awareness of the light . . . there are no words to convey the moods of those moments."

It was during a 1927 trip that Adams captured one of his most famous images, standing precariously on a ridge with his unwieldy camera and glass plates, looking out on Yosemite's famous Half Dome. He took one photograph, then reconsidered, wanting more emotional gravity. Picturing in his mind what that might look like, he put a red filter over the lens. "I really wanted to give it a monumental, dark quality," he wrote. *Monolith—The Face of Half Dome* was the origin of his "visualization" technique—seeing an image in all its detail before snapping the shutter.

Adams' predecessors were the 19th century romantic landscape painters such as Alfred Bierstadt and Thomas Moran, who por-







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trayed the wilderness as a spiritual idyll from which industrial, urban America had become alienated. Romanticism still held sway when Adams picked up his camera, but the unadorned photograph was considered more documentary than aesthetic. To render it less literal, some used soft focus, painted negatives, or textured paper. Edward Weston took the opposite approach, emphasizing sharp focus and contrast. Adams was a disciple. And, having once entertained a career as a concert pianist, his discipline as a musician found its way into his craft.



**LEFT:** *Early Morning, Merced River, Yosemite National Park.* **ABOVE:** *Sugarpine Boughs and Lichen, Yosemite National Park, California, 1962*

A wealthy art patron, Albert Bender, was so taken he supported Adams financially, providing an entrée into San Francisco's art world and encouraging his first portfolio, *Parmelian Prints of the High Sierra*. A Smithsonian exhibition followed. A *Washington Post* reviewer wrote, "His photographs are like portraits of the giant peaks, which seem to be inhabited by mythical gods." During the 1930s, troubled by the increasing commercial development in Yosemite Valley, Adams produced the limited edition *Sierra Nevada: The John Muir Trail*, published with the Sierra Club to draw support for the creation of Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park. The club sent Adams to a Washington conference with Interior Secretary Ickes and other officials, his photographs a powerful argument. Ickes sent the images on to President Roosevelt, and both lobbied for the park, designated in 1940.

As Adams' visibility rose, so did the Sierra Club's. With each of his triumphs, the wild places he so loved earned more stature. People were not simply looking at mountains and forests anymore. They were looking at an idea: wilderness as essential to the nation's soul.

In 1936, *An American Place*, his first New York solo exhibit at legendary photographer Alfred Stieglitz's gallery, was a hit with critics and public alike. In 1940, he curated *A Pageant of Photography* to critical acclaim, a show at San Francisco's Golden Gate Exhibition that also featured other photographers. After World War II, he got a Guggenheim fellowship to photograph the national parks. A host of books followed.

**In the 1950s, with unprecedented interest in the parks and an explosion of cars, visitation skyrocketed. Adams called for moderation in meeting the influx. "The imposition of commercial 'resortism' violates the true function of national parks," he wrote. "Things are appreciated for size, unusuality, and scarcity more than for their subtleties and emotional relationship to everyday life," with the parks becoming "gargantuan curio[s] to be seen, not experienced."** In 1955, he and longtime collaborator writer Nancy Newhall produced the exhibit, *This Is the American Earth*, which toured internationally with a companion book published to stellar reviews. It was one of the critical influences in the rise of the environmental movement. By the 1970s, Ansel Adams was a legend. "Dear Mr. Adams," an admirer began her letter. "In writing to you, I almost feel that I am writing to John Muir, or to Yosemite Valley itself." He was a perennial guest of presidents at the White House, where he was not afraid to tell them they should be doing more.

In 1975 he helped found the Center for Creative Photography, a research institution including a museum, photographic archives, and a library. His negatives are now in cold storage, with the photographs conserved so scholars and public can view them in a renovated research space.

In his lens, the landscape became a "symbolic destination," as described in an exhibit at Washington, DC's Corcoran Gallery. Its closing lines captured the essence of his images: "Adams made art that embodied a dream of unbound nature—a sphere where mystery and wonder give way to peace and a sense of one's place in the firmament."

**BELOW:** *Icicles, Yosemite National Park, 1950.* **RIGHT:** *Winter Sunrise, Sierra Nevada, from Lone Pine, California.*





# TAX CREDIT

F E D E R A L   D O L L A R S   I N   S U P P O R T   O F   P R E S E R V A T I O N

**REX GARMENT FACTORY** New Orleans' historic Bywater District encompasses a wealth of old commercial buildings and warehouses like the Rex Garment Factory, built in 1930 and once part of the city's thriving manufacturing base. But as the New Orleans economy moved away from industry, factories suffered, and the Rex closed in the 1980s. Today it is known as the Bywater Lofts, an \$8.2 million transformation done with the help of federal preservation tax credits that retains the mercantile look in apartments and studio spaces for artists. While the interior was reconfigured for new use, the masonry façade was restored and the historic sewing floor is now an atrium, vented via original clerestory windows with period fans.

**BLOUNT HARVEY DEPARTMENT STORE** In a time when a shopping trip was meant to be special, department stores were designed with flair, and not just in the big cities. In 1920, a Greenville, North Carolina, street corner saw the construction of the two-story Blount Harvey building, designed to be both functional and expressive, with large windows on the second floor, decorative brick work, terra cotta rosettes, and other details at the cornice. Its interior featured pressed metal ceilings and wooden floors. In the 1960s, the store fell victim to changing tastes and demographics, and the exterior was modernized with a solid brick veneer. After standing vacant since 1985, the building was purchased by a local family, who embarked on a painstaking rehabilitation in 2005. The brick façade was removed to reveal the original exterior, and historic features inside received much needed repairs. The \$2.4 million rehab, done with the help of tax credits, brought the structure back to life, which now houses retail shops and serves as the focus of a downtown revitalization.

**to qualify for tax credits** *The new use must be income producing, the structure certified as historic, and the renovation in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The credit equals up to 20 percent of the project cost. The preservation tax credit program is administered by the National Park Service with IRS.*

**contact point** **web** [www.nps.gov/hps/tps/tax/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/tax/index.htm)

## Wedding Cake Mansion >>

One of the nation's most architecturally rich cities, Savannah treasures its past. Restorations are not uncommon, since the built environment is so much a part of the city's identity. In a recent project supported by a federal historic preservation tax incentive, one of Savannah's most-photographed landmarks became a boutique hotel for well-heeled travelers. Popularly known as the Wedding Cake Mansion, the house at 14 East Taylor Street is an extravagant Second Empire Baroque structure built in 1869. The group Luxury Living Savannah, which offers historic houses for rent, put nearly \$2 million into the rehab, which—since the new use was in-

**THE GROUP LUXURY LIVING SAVANNAH, WHICH OFFERS HISTORIC HOUSES FOR RENT, PUT NEARLY \$2 MILLION INTO THE REHAB, WHICH—SINCE THE NEW USE WAS INCOME PRODUCING—QUALIFIED FOR THE INCENTIVE UNDER THE FEDERAL TAX CREDIT PROGRAM.**

come producing—qualified for the incentive under the federal tax credit program. The house is actually one of a pair—a duplex built for rich 19th century urbanites. Grand houses like this one were built with cheap labor and abundant, inexpensive materials, so extravagance was not difficult to achieve. The original resident of 14 East Taylor was then-mayor Daniel Purse. The house one sees today is not the one built in 1869. In the latter half of the 19th century, a new style emerged in France, migrating to these shores shortly after the Civil War. Called Second Empire Baroque because of its popularity in the Paris of Napoleon III, it was characterized by elaborate ornamentation. Washington, DC's Executive Office Building is a monumental example of the style, which caught on notably for post offices and railroad terminals around the country. It also became fashionable for urban homeowners to redo their facades with Second Empire flourishes, a hot trend in New York and Boston. German architect Detlef Lienau brought the style to Savannah in 1869. The bay windows on the Wedding Cake Mansion, its surface façade, and its mansard roof are part of a Second Empire renovation done in 1897, a time that saw a transformation of Savannah. According to the National Trust guide to the city, "Local builders were applying vivacious relief surfaces to the older staid [classical] buildings." Second Empire in particular created "an amusing and fanciful street scene." The Wedding Cake Mansion's windows look out over Monterey Square, made famous by the book *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*. Rehabilitation included window and plaster repairs, removing dropped ceilings, restoring the pressed metal above, and refinishing floors and interior woodwork.







# idea

AMERICA'S BEST

MUSINGS ON NATIONAL PARKS PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE, INSPIRED BY THE NEW FILM FROM KEN BURNS

a conversation with national parks scholar **ethan carr**, yellowstone national park superintendent **suzanne lewis**, former national park service deputy director **john reynolds**, and lowell national historical park ranger **duey kohl** moderated by **lucy lawliss** george washington birthplace national monument/thomas stone national historic site superintendent **and tim davis** national park service historian

**“One learns that the world, though made, is yet being made. That this is still the morning of creation,”** says John Muir to commence the magnificent *The National Parks: America's Best Idea*. The same may be said of the National Park Service itself, as this group of commentators looks at its past as prelude: Ethan Carr, professor of landscape architecture at the University of Virginia and author of *Wilderness by Design: Landscape Architecture and the National Park Service* and *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma*; Suzanne Lewis, superintendent of Yellowstone, featured in the film; John Reynolds, consultant to the National Parks Second Century Commission, talking about its upcoming report; and Duey Kohl, a Cambodian-American ranger at Lowell National Historical Park, which is trying to stay key in revitalizing the former industrial city while being relevant to a burgeoning southeast Asian community.

**LEFT: DRY TORTUGAS NATIONAL PARK** “Fort Jefferson is the largest brick structure in the western hemisphere,” says photographer Q. T. Luong, who has made a career of photographing the national parks. “What I found striking was the continuity between the ocean and the walls.” A French citizen of Vietnamese descent, Luong started out photographing the Alps, and his curiosity became a passion with the American landscape, his work featured in the new Ken Burns film.

**LUCY:** What were your impressions of the film? Suzanne?

**SUZANNE:** I was mesmerized. Ken Burns is an extremely talented storyteller who just happens to have this other side of his brain that is really connected to media. A point of pride for me was seeing Gerard Baker, an American Indian with his braids, in a park ranger uniform.

**DUEY:** The film seemed so lofty. It was great to see the complete picture of our system, but when you work in a place like Lowell, the big grand parks out west have little to do with us on a day-to-day basis. How do we connect those parks with people coming to urban sites like ours? I grew up in the city my whole life and went camping this summer and hated it.

**JOHN:** In one episode, Nevada Barr—who worked at Yosemite—compares coming back to going home. That was resonant for me. My wife was born in Yosemite Valley, where her folks worked for the concession, so our entire lives have been entwined with the Park System. We can all go home to what our nation is made of—what it has gone through and is going through—by way of the parks. The Lincoln Memorial segments illustrate that well. In 1939, Marian Anderson—a celebrated

**ETHAN:** The amazing thing is that Burns and writer Dayton Duncan managed to pull it together. It's such a complex history, a whole bunch of different histories, really, because the Park System is so complex.

**TIM:** It's impressive how they bring it down to the individual level, with the photo albums and the home movies of visitors. The albums of the couple from Nebraska, that's an emotional highlight.

**JOHN:** And the story of the Japanese painter of Yosemite. During World War II, after he's taken away to an internment camp, his wife reminds him how he feels about the sequoias, to give him strength. And today the Manzanar camp is a national park—equal to Yellowstone and Yosemite. Not just as land we own, but as ethics we own. That's what this film is about. Not the national parks, but the national parks idea. It's about this complex heritage, some of it land, but not all of it.

**ETHAN:** That the National Park System embodies not just biology, not just history, but the idea of a national identity infused in these landscapes.

**LUCY:** Burns has said that history “is an inclusion of myth as well as fact because myth tells you much more than fact about a people.” Suzanne,



**It was great to see the complete picture** of our system, but when you work in a place like Lowell, the big grand parks out west have little to do with us on a day-to-day basis. —**Duey Kohl**

African American singer—performs for 75,000 people, invited by Interior Secretary Ickes after the Daughters of the American Revolution barred her performance at Constitution Hall. Not many years later, Martin Luther King makes his “I Have a Dream” speech. And Park Service Director George Hartzog recalls bringing his father, who was from South Carolina and undoubtedly a post-Confederate. George almost cries recalling what his father says after reading what’s inscribed there—something like “now I understand.”

**ABOVE: OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK** “A remarkable place,” says photographer Luong. “The trees are so laden with moss it gives you a feeling like you’re in a forest imagined by Tolkien.” **RIGHT: YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK** Luong’s camera catches sweep and detail alike. “The grass in the stream made an interesting pattern, and the stream was so clear you could see the same pattern underwater.”





as superintendent of such an iconic place, what are your thoughts about the myth of the national parks—and those who made them?

**SUZANNE:** I think of it as individual threads that make up a tapestry. In a tapestry there are always flaws. There's one thread that got a little wiggly, that got a little out of play. The weave wasn't tight, or the weave was too tight. And myth and fact, too, are a lot like a weaving. You have to have both to give the broadest view. Some people don't like history because facts don't appeal to them, but the combination of personal stories and impressions, blended with facts, gives you a true connection. And this film does a great job of blending the two. Beyond merely reciting the history, it creates a sense of heritage.

**LUCY:** How did you feel watching as superintendent of a featured park?

**SUZANNE:** It was a little overwhelming, a little gulp. I had a real sense of the honor that comes with the responsibility of how my decisions will lead, like another piece of yarn in the tapestry.

**TIM:** The film does a very good job of exploring the tension, or paradox, between preserving places and promoting access to them, exemplified

the '30s to backpacking in the '60s and '70s. And it not only changes, it's additive, bringing in sites like Lowell, whose preservation as a historic place is every bit as much about restoring its health as bringing back the wolf at Yellowstone, conceptually no different. Lowell is a social ecosystem in the same way that Yellowstone is an ecological one.

**TIM:** The film begins with Muir and ends with the wolf, and in between has endless wonderful scenery of the crown jewel natural parks. How will this emphasis affect the conception of what the Park Service is and does? How do scenery and wildlife relate to an increasingly urban and diverse society?

**JOHN:** Burns and Duncan chose to talk about what they wanted to talk about—how the national park idea evolved up to 1980. It worries me tremendously that we're going to leave everybody thinking about just the grand parks and not connecting them to the rest. The Second Century Commission began by suffering through the same dilemma, growing its understanding. The country has no comprehension of how the park idea has evolved to embrace other kinds of places.

**LUCY:** Duey, what does your park mean to the Cambodian community?

**DUHEY:** Being Cambodian myself, I identify with the immigrant experience, and try to work toward building an inclusive, multicultural city. It's about involving the park in the life of the people. Promoting community dialogue can be a powerful first step in changing the dynamic. If you listen to all the voices, you find innovative ways to approach audiences, like our southeast Asian water festival.

**JOHN:** If the Park Service does not have a primary objective of connecting to the diversity of the population, it's likely to become an anachronism.

**SUZANNE:** Sometimes, especially with places like Yellowstone, we want to tell ourselves there will be no change, but that's a falsehood. A recent example is visitors wanting wireless service. Half do, and half don't. So what's acceptable? I'm a visitor standing on the boardwalk waiting for Old Faithful to go off. I don't want to hear the person next to me on their cell. Yet that person feels such a deep connection they call a friend or family member and say, "Get on the live stream. Look with me." Young people have a total expectation to be connected while they're on the



**It worries me tremendously** that we're going to leave everybody thinking about just the grand parks . . . The country has no comprehension of how the park idea has evolved to embrace other kinds of places. —**John Reynolds**

by Director Stephen Mather's "deal with the devil," the automobile, in the early 20th century. Throughout history, visitors and managers have had to continuously re-think what the parks are for. What do you think audiences will take away from this?

**JOHN:** Mather had to get the people to believe there was something real in the parks. So he encouraged them to come by car, and their personal ties translated to political power, which is how our nation works. The environmental movement strengthened that dynamic. How we manage the parks always reflects how they are supported by the people and therefore by the political process. The film shows their social usefulness changing through time, from things like golf and tennis in parks of

**LEFT: WRANGELL-ST. ELIAS NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE** *The abandoned Kennecott copper mill. The landscape's connection to human history can be subtle or pronounced. "I try to invite the viewer to consider the space as if they were standing there themselves," photographer Luong says. "My goal has always been to bring back the wonders I've seen to people who can't get there."* **ABOVE: DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK** *Death Valley, the final resting place for an old sedan.*

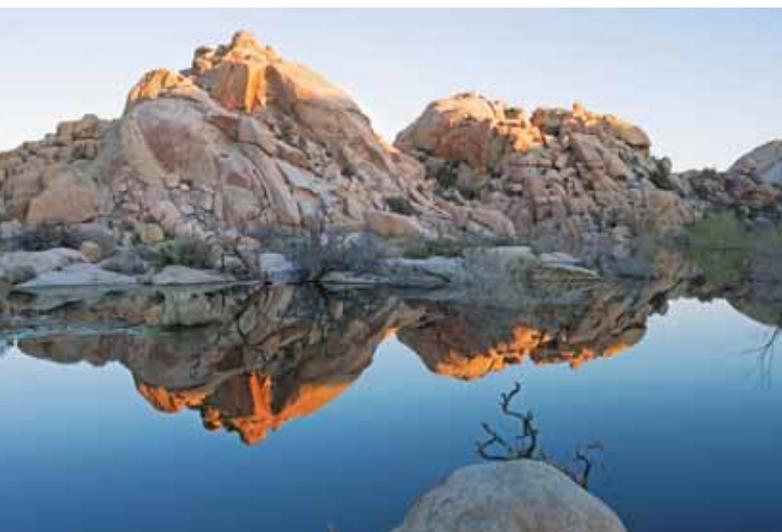
road. We have to find a way to recognize all sides, rather than making binary decisions of yes/no, right/wrong, stop/go.

**LUCY:** With the audience shifts, how do you keep your finger on the pulse?

**SUZANNE:** I would tell you that we don't even have our finger on the pulse in the first place. As a Service, we're woefully inadequate on social science to help in our decision-making.

**TIM:** Ethan, given the changing demographics, if your landscape architecture students were to design a national park now, what would it look like?

**ETHAN:** Something that comes through in the film is that the ideology of public parks remains very powerful. And part of my answer is, what did parks look like in the past? How well did they work? What has changed in society? Are the underlying assumptions the same? There have been some influential design competitions lately, most for parks in places like Los Angeles and New York, and one recently for Gateway National Recreation Area. The designs pay close attention to ecology and process in the shaping of the landscape, and the experience is a far



**Something that comes through** in the film is that the ideology of public parks remains very powerful . . . What has changed in society? Are the underlying assumptions the same? —**Ethan Carr**

less structured one. The cultural associations are constantly changing, not fixed, with multiple narratives. But these designs are often difficult to implement. How many can I point to and say, "That's what a park should look like today." Very few.

**DUHEY:** That's the thing. The parks were created at a moment when they reflected a certain vision of American society. Some of us don't share that history. It's good to think about it, but how do we make the Park Service a contemporary teacher of American citizens? How do we engage a multi-cultural society? I live in the city and I can see our park as a gateway to some of the amazing places out West that helped define this nation.

**JOHN:** This is a critical comment. We've got to drop out of what's comfortable without losing sight of what's good. Connecting people does not

start at the park, it starts by going to the people. That's what Mather did in a different time. The staff at the Santa Monica Mountains park went into east L.A.'s Hispanic community, and even though they were nervous, maybe scared, they were welcomed. People were curious about the park, and wondered if they could have a role in it.

**LUCY:** To a degree we've seen the parks as islands. Suzanne, when I first met you, I was inspired by your earlier work as superintendent at Florida's Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve.

**SUZANNE:** It's one of the "new" partnership parks owned only in part by the Park Service, originally established as Fort Caroline National Memorial, a scale model of a French colonial fortification. Today, it not only tells the colonial story, but is a place of multiple experiences embracing 6,000 years of human history and millions of years of nature—managed by dynamic partners working to convey the multi-layered stories to the public.

**LUCY:** Not a place of boundaries—political, social, or legal—but a place of relationships. Not so much a place as experiences that change people's lives. And with Burns inspiring a new wave of visitors, where can they find these experiences? All the parks can be gateways to other places.

**ETHAN:** What I'm hearing is that bold responses are needed in park development, not just a parking overlook or a visitor center, which tends to be a monolithic approach of interpreting dispersed landscapes that have multiple narratives. People point to the promise of technology—handheld GPS devices that could give you different layers and interpretations to carry with you. Transportation is another issue. You don't experience places standing still, you experience them in motion. Stop thinking of transportation as infrastructure and more as a mode for interpreting experience. There are dramatic new ways of thinking about parks, called for in part because of changes in society and technology. We just don't know what they look like yet.

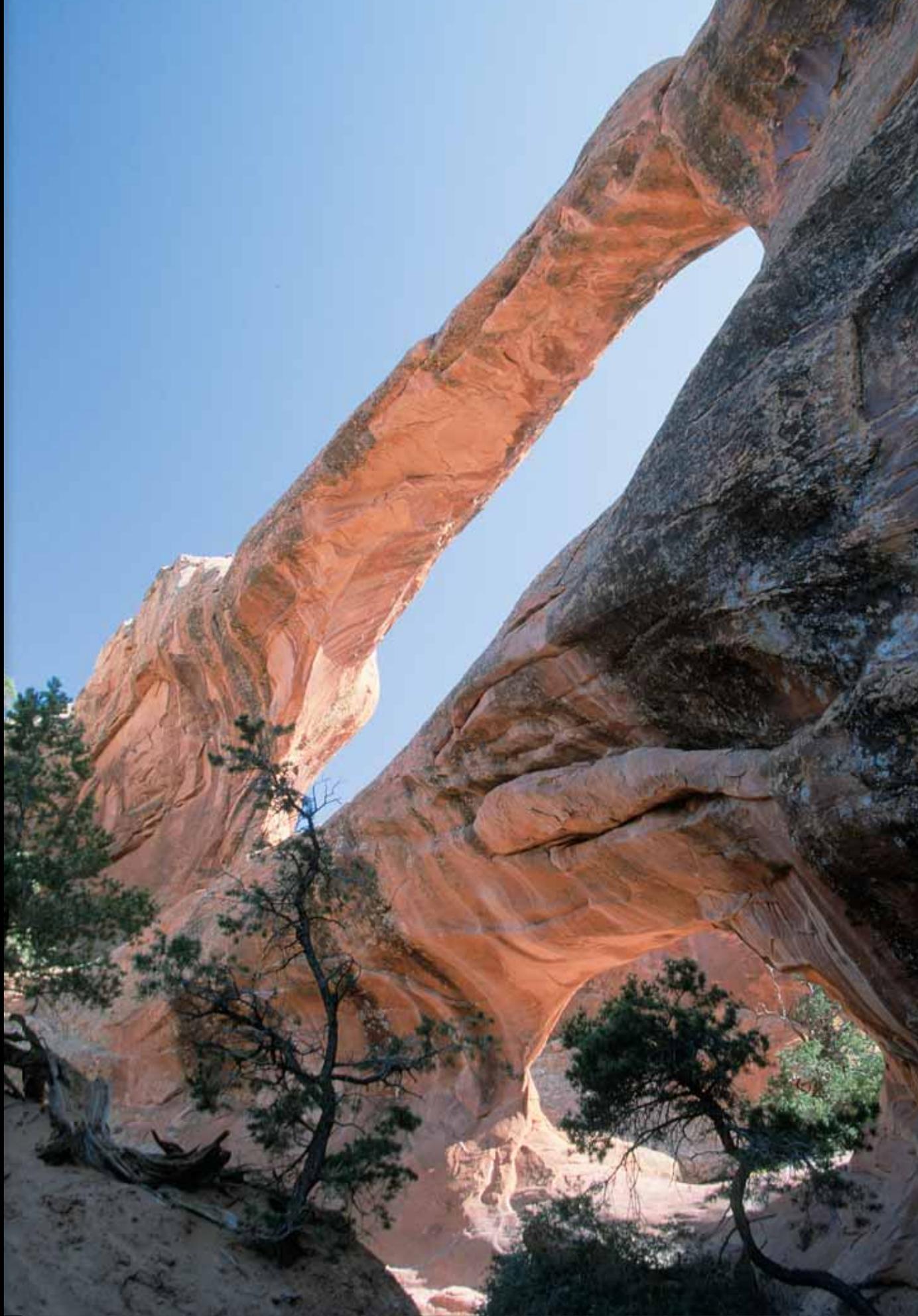
**JOHN:** But the National Park Service can't just rely on the rangers anymore. Soon people will be able to communicate all the information instantly to each other. Where's the park interpreter on the iPhone?

**ETHAN:** That's what I meant about looking back at what was successful.

The campfire and the ranger are not going to be surpassed by a handheld.

**LUCY:** Most visitors don't get away from the visitor center because they don't know how to encounter the place surrounding it. Visiting a park has always been to some degree a guided experience. We need to reinvigorate and reinvent the guided side.

**ABOVE: JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK** *A reservoir reflects the arid rock.*  
**RIGHT: ARCHES NATIONAL PARK** *Eons of erosion at work.*





**TIM:** Burns spotlights larger-than-life figures like Muir and Teddy Roosevelt. Is there something in us that longs for visionaries and men of action? Do we need another FDR?

**ETHAN:** They would never be able to accomplish the same things because we're a different world today. The parks are so diverse and decentralized, dependent on partnerships, local organizations, volunteers. The way the government works is profoundly different. You really can't have FDR anymore. That's not the America we live in.

**JOHN:** You accomplish things not by fiat but with dynamic leaders who can work in today's milieu.

**DUHEY:** What's troubling for me is that there's a gap sometimes between the magnitude of the challenge and the smallness of a system where we're easily distracted by everyday things. I guess being young I'm impatient to see change. Here in Lowell, 1980—when the film ends—is when the most recent wave of immigration came, southeast Asian refugees who left their homelands reluctantly and can't return for fear of government persecution. We need to figure out how to embrace groups for whom participation in public processes doesn't come naturally.

**JOHN:** Right. It's not up to the community to say, "How can we help make you better?" It's up to the parks to say, "How can we be a part of you?"

**TIM:** It's instructive to consider the Park Service was founded in the aftermath of a similar immigration-fueled change in society, when culturally different groups and the poor were "Americanized" through schools, settlement houses, Scouts, and the parks. Now we seem to be saying that we want to become more like you, rather than wanting you to become like us.

**JOHN:** I wouldn't say it that way. The parks themselves don't change. One of the things in the film was how, through the CCC, the parks were so socially useful in the Depression. What is our usefulness to society today? The Second Century Commission discussed that a lot.

**LUCY:** Tim, do parks of the past show shifts in our ideological compass?

**TIM:** The interpretation at the first wave of historical parks, beginning with George Washington's birthplace in the 1930s, focused on romantic sagas of quaint colonists and stalwart revolutionaries, followed a little later by sites where log cabins and sturdy pioneers joined the clapboard

**DUHEY:** To be right with yourself, to do right by others, to lend meaning to a community's experiences, requires real commitment. I stay grounded knowing that my park's investment in the community is strong.

**JOHN:** Political constituency is the most vital issue in the commission's report. One has to prove one's usefulness to society through all times forever, and the Congress is changing because the people are changing.

**ETHAN:** With the centennial of the Park Service approaching, it's a wonderful thing that great popular attention is being brought to how important parks have been at such a crucial moment in their history.

**SUZANNE:** I'm a born optimist, so with this film, new leaders, and the centennial, I'm hoping to see this huge uplifting of the National Park Service, almost like watching the ground move up, and that moving up makes room for new ways of approaching our issues, new people feeling connections to the parks, and new energy in our workforce. And this will only happen if we are all part of that lifting up, and understand that conflict is now more the norm than less. It's not a black/white, yes/no world anymore. It's something much more sophisticated. But



## The parks were created at a moment when they reflected a certain vision of American society. Some of us don't share that history. —Duey Kohl

mansions of the Founding Fathers. But the underlying story was the same: how northern Europeans settled the continent and forged the nation. Visitors to these "schools for Americanism" were expected to emulate the noble demonstrations of pioneer fortitude, selflessness, and cooperative spirit. And for an increasingly heterogeneous society, suffering through the Depression, World War II, and the Cold War, the vision of a strong populace united by a shared destiny offered a respite from the anxieties of the time. Today, of course, the Park Service promotes a more inclusive view. So for me, one of the film's most important points is that, at any given time, the parks reflect how we see ourselves as a society—not just who we were, but who we are and want to be.

**LUCY:** We've covered a lot of territory. Closing thoughts?

there's no better time for the Park Service to stand very, very tall about who we are and what we do. Not in an arrogant way, but in a sense of service to our mission, and our history.

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**LEFT: HOT SPRINGS NATIONAL PARK** Over time, ornate bathhouses like this one were built around the springs, whose waters are believed to have therapeutic powers. **ABOVE: THEODORE ROOSEVELT NATIONAL PARK** A study in contrasts. "You see in the background those badlands formations," says photographer Luong. "And then you see in the foreground a concretion—very large, about four feet across. I had not seen any such formation anywhere in the other parks."

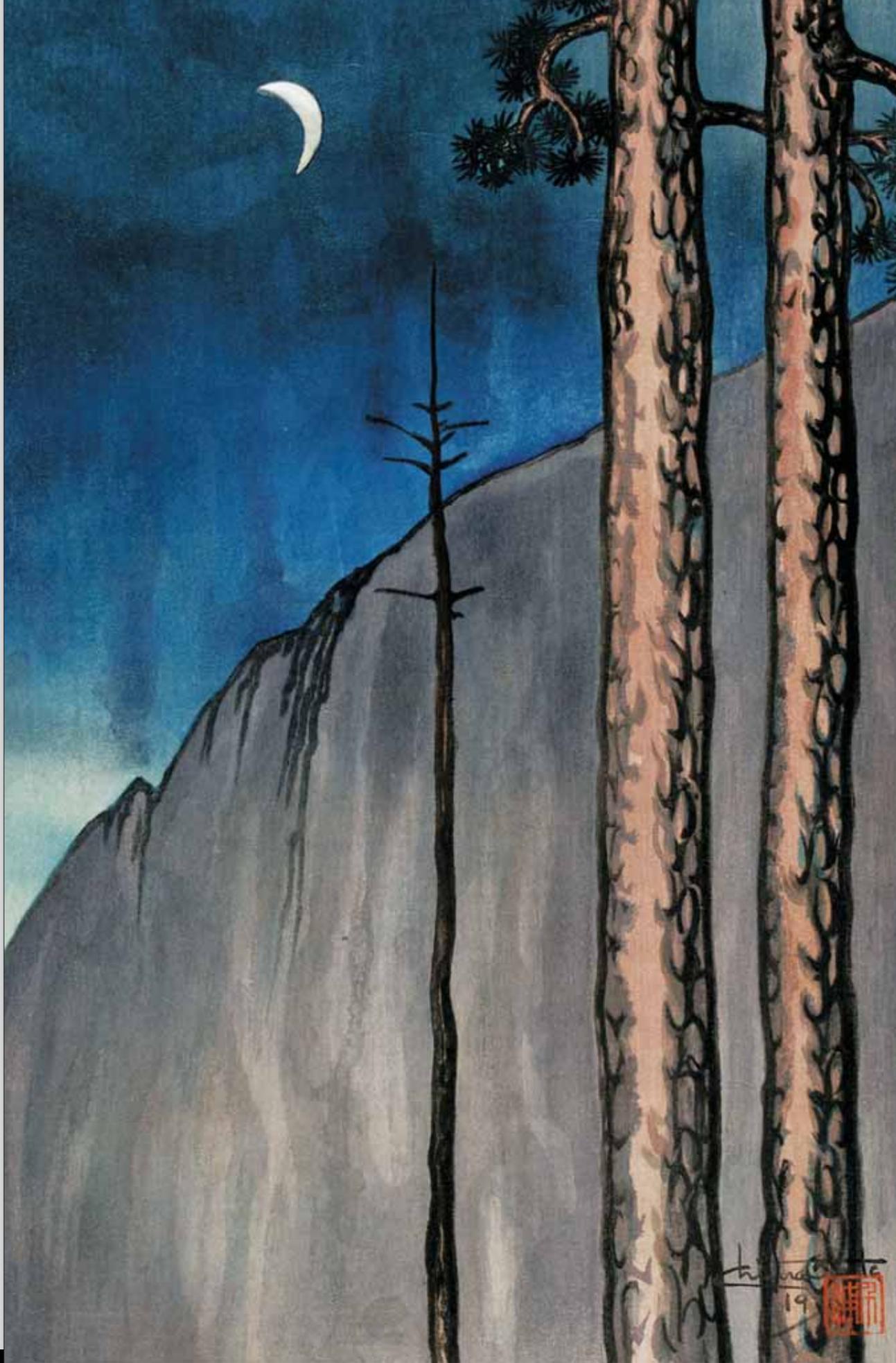
# obata's yosemite

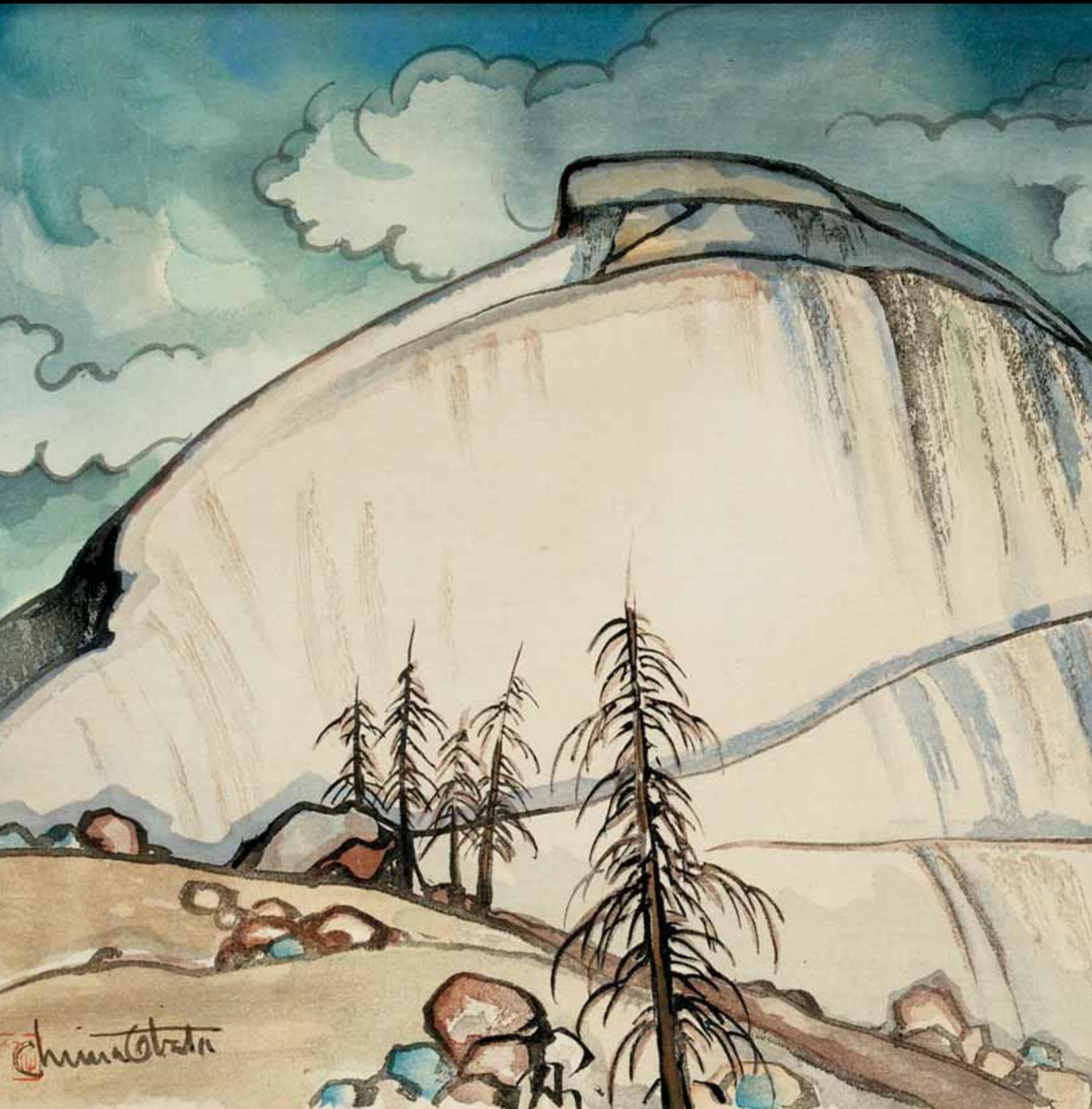
Yosemite National Park has long been a magnet for artists, Thomas Moran and Ansel Adams to name a few. “Yosemite is one of the country’s premier art parks,” says Jonathan Bayless, the park’s chief curator. But there was a time when the oasis of nature was deemed “unpaintable,” largely due to the work of accomplished but over-the-top artists such as Albert Bierstadt, whose large-scale oils, lush and romantic, inspired both awe and loathing. Mark Twain said that Bierstadt’s *Domes of the Yosemite*, 9 1/2 feet high and 15 feet long, reminded him more of “Kingdom-Come” than California. However gorgeous, such works spawned “a virtual industry of sentimental painting and verse,” writes Susan Landauer in *Obata’s Yosemite*. “The result was that many serious painters shied away from the theme.” Chiura Obata helped change that.

**RIGHT:** *Evening Moon*, color woodblock print, 1930. “From Eagle Peake Trail the massive stroke of the rocky mountains can be seen cutting boldly across the heavens—a prelude of melody before the evening moon.” —Chiura Obata

chiura obata's brush with zen in the high sierras by meghan hogan

ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF THE OBATA FAMILY EXCEPT AS NOTED







Obata, one of the artists featured in Ken Burns' new film on the parks, helped change perceptions with his first set of watercolor sketches after a visit in 1927. Blending modernism with traditional painting, they remain some of the park's most distinctive images, still "fresh," says Kimi Kodani Hill, his granddaughter, their simple, cropped compositions worlds away from Bierstadt's all-encompassing panoramas. Hill cites a sketch of Yosemite Falls, focused on a thin stream of waterfall and surrounding rock: "Many western artists would paint the whole thing with the mountains in the background. He cropped it like you would with a

**OBATA'S ESPOUSAL OF THE ZEN TRADITION . . . LED HIM TO IMBUE HIS LANDSCAPES WITH AN INTENSE CALLIGRAPHIC EXPRESSIVENESS.**

camera. It makes a very striking graphic image." And contemporary—not at all like three quarters of a century ago. Obata, who subscribed to the Buddhist belief of keeping your mind open and pure so as to experience every moment, roamed Yosemite mesmerized by its unspoiled nature, the experience staying with him for the rest of his life. "It was just the perfect moment in time," Hill says. "He made a very deep spiritual connection." Writes Landauer, "Obata's espousal of the Zen tradition . . . led him to imbue his landscapes with an intense calligraphic expressiveness."



His visit to the park was initiated by an invitation from fellow artist Worth Ryder, an art professor at the University of California, Berkeley, who enjoyed hiking. Obata enjoyed hiking too, but went there mostly for the chance to create art, which at the age of 42 had been his way of life for many years. Born in 1885 in Sendai, Japan, he was adopted by his older brother, Rokuichi, a noted painter, at the age of five. He soon showed an instinct for art himself. At the age of seven, he began an apprenticeship to learn the ancient Chinese craft of sumi-e painting, a style of monochrome ink painting introduced into Japanese culture by Zen Buddhists around the 14th century. In his teens, he moved to Tokyo, where he attended the Japan Fine Arts Academy and trained with eminent artists Tanryo Murata and Gaho Hashimoto. His talent earned awards and commissions, but he wanted to see the bigger world. So at the age of 18, he left for San Francisco, a new world and not a friendly one for a Japanese immigrant. When he sailed into Seattle in 1903, he was hardly the only Asian on the boat. It was the height of immigration, with 110,000 Japanese coming to America between 1900 and 1907. It was also a time of great prejudice against Japanese Americans. Obata was spit on in the streets and attacked.

**LEFT:** *Death's Grave Pass and Tenaya Peak*, color woodblock print, 1930. "While standing at Death's Grave Pass, I recalled many American Indian legends and historical facts centered on the imposing Tenaya Peak seen in the distance." —Chiura Obata **ABOVE:** Berkeley, 1930s.

His first job was as a household servant, but he soon found his creative footing. Despite the xenophobia, Americans had an appetite for Asian art, and Obata profited from the early 1900s rage for Japonisme with his Tosa- and Kano-style screens and murals showcased in department stores. The bulk of his earnings, however, came from illustrating Japanese-language publications. He married Haruko Kohashi, a fellow immigrant, in 1912, and as they started a family, he sold work back in his homeland as well. It wasn't until the 1920s that he became more involved with the western art world, in 1921 helping create the East-West Art Society, a group celebrating art in both hemispheres. Several esteemed painters joined, including Perham Nahl and Ray Boynton, connections that later helped Obata in his career.

**He and Ryder started their journey into Yosemite on June 16, 1927,** at the Big Flat Oak road entrance along the park's western border. The pair slowly wound their way eastward, towards the other side of the park, using Tioga Road, one of the major thoroughfares and the only route through the Sierra. "In the 1920s it was a much rougher road than it is today, but the appeal was that it brought one very close, by car, to

**WHEN WE REACHED MONO LAKE . . . A MYSTERIOUS FEELING OVERWHELMED US. IT WAS BEYOND**

Robert Boardman Howard, a fellow Berkeley artist, joined them the first week of July. That first night around the campfire, Obata said he intended to paint 100 more pictures. At the end of the month, the trio left Yosemite Valley for the high Sierra. "When we reached Mono Lake the tranquil lake did not even ripple. A mysterious feeling overwhelmed us. It was beyond description," wrote Obata. It was one of his last sights of the expedition. He returned home four days later on July 30, but he brought the indelible experience with him. In a last letter from the park, he wrote "From the deep impression of my experience there springs an emotion which others may not understand . . . I am looking forward with pleasure and hope as to how I will be able to express this precious experience on silk."

While he did express his emotions by recreating some of the images on silk, he drew acclaim for his woodblock prints, which involve carving images onto blocks of wood and cutting off the unprinted sections. At the news of his father's death the next year, he and his family left for Japan where he employed Tadeo Takamizawa, one of the country's most illustrious print publishers, to create his prints. Using his drawings,

—CHIURA OBATA

craftsmen created a series of woodblocks for each different area of color. Hill says the concept for the prints was most likely her grandfather's ingrained homage to Japanese tradition. "It was the going on and recording of a journey," much like other Japanese expeditions preserved in art, such as Katsushika Hokusai's famed *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*.

Obata's standards were high; some prints went through as many as 160 states before being finished. They took 18 months to produce and a team of more than 32 carvers and 40 printers. Only the best 100 were chosen for the final portfolios; over 10,000 impressions were deemed inferior and destroyed. The prints were then wrapped in decorative sleeves inscribed with their titles, Obata's name, and the publisher. The process was expensive—Obata used the family's entire savings and then had to borrow 20,000 yen (approximately \$214) so that they could get back to America. The prints earned him acclaim throughout California. Critics were taken with the woodblock print format, and his efforts in creating the prints, as well as his extraordinary attention to detail, didn't go unnoticed. He was appointed an art instructor at the University of California, Berkeley, where he spent the next several years teaching and lecturing, often taking time to revisit Yosemite and tour other national parks.

**LEFT:** *Along Mono Lake, sumi and watercolor on paper, 1927.* **RIGHT:** *Life and Death, Porcupine Flat, color woodblock print, 1930.* "In the burning heat of the summer day, against the deep blue skies, stands a towering pine tree, brimming with life. At the foot of the pine tree lies another tree, dead and white." —Chiura Obata

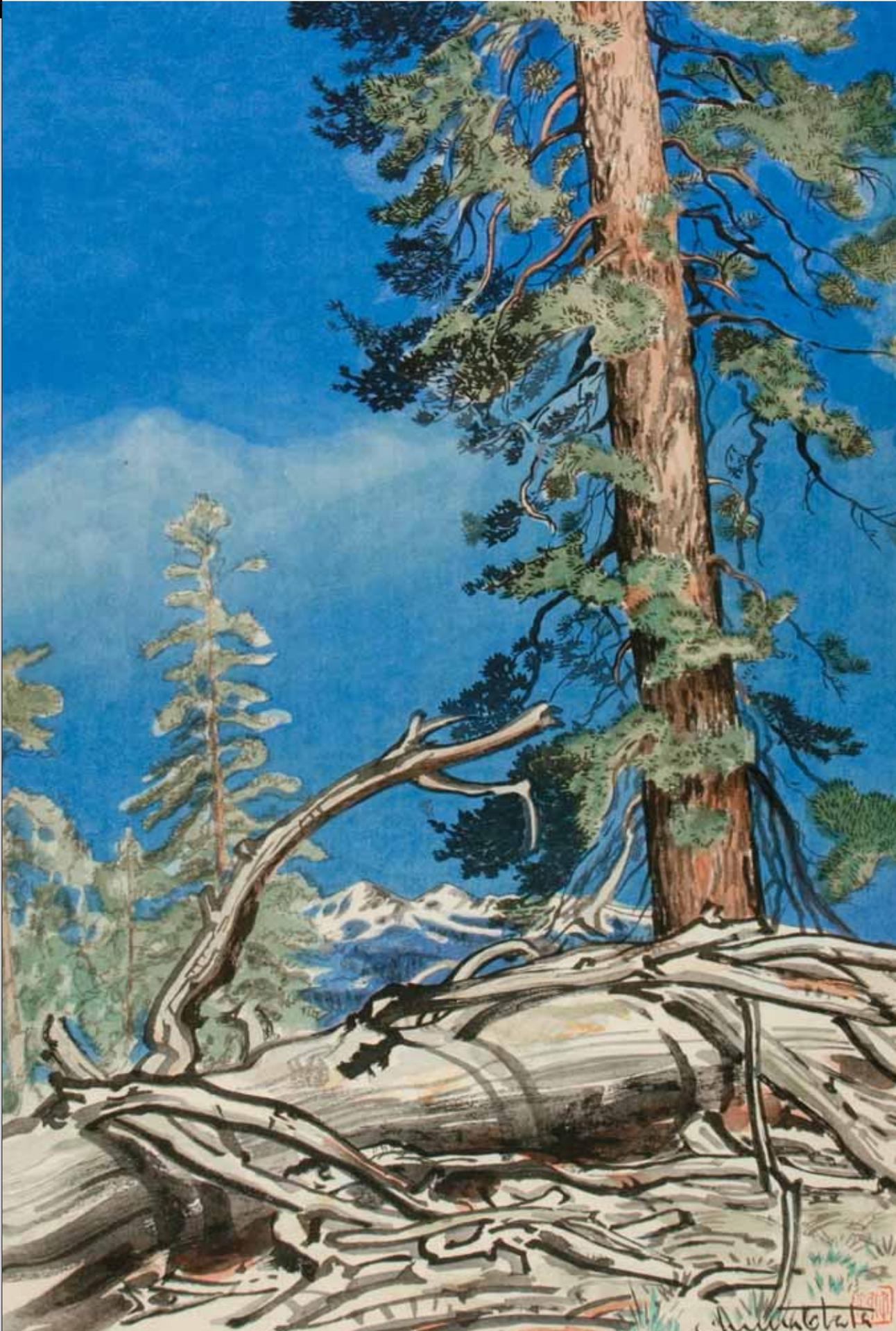


the alpine meadows, glaciers, lakes, and the high Sierra environs," Bayless says. Yosemite Valley was, and still is, the most visited area of the park, but in Ryder's Model T they strayed off the beaten path. "Much of the 19th-century art was focused on the valley, so Obata's diversity of locations helped to diversify the views of Yosemite," Bayless says.

As they navigated through the park, Obata and Ryder leisurely hiked, fished, and of course, sketched and painted. Obata's letters reflect how clearly awestruck he was. "Great silver fir and pine wound their roots around the unusual, interesting rocks left behind by the glacier's erosion. They stand even after experiencing hundreds of years of hardship," he marveled while standing at Porcupine Flat.

DESCRIPTION.

SMITHSONIAN AMERICAN ART MUSEUM/GIFT OF THE OBATA FAMILY



Shigeo Fukuda





SMITHSONIAN AMERICAN ART MUSEUM/GIFT OF THE OBATA FAMILY

**Obata's peaceful life of art and nature came crashing down in** February 1942 with the opening of internment camps for Japanese Americans two months after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Almost 120,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans were sent to internment camps. Although his son, Gyo, obtained a last-minute approval to attend architecture school in St. Louis, where he could avoid the camps, Obata, his wife, and children Kim and Yuri had no choice but to go. They were first sent to Tanforan Assembly Center, a temporary camp in San Bruno, California, where—as *Obata's Yosemite* describes it—the accommodations were a “horse stall with hay for bedding.” Hill, the family historian and author of *Topaz Moon: Chiura Obata's Art of the Internment*, says that it was the first time her mother saw her grandmother cry. Five months later, they were relocated to Topaz in Utah.

For Obata, at the age of 57, the experience must have been extremely sobering. He made the best of it with his art. Together with fellow artist and internee George Hibi, he established art schools offering a range of classes to over 600 students. In addition to teaching art to others, he also worked on paintings of his own, not just to keep busy, but to document the experience. He found beauty and inspiration in the barren desert, as his airbrushed watercolor camp scenes illustrate. “His experience of knowing nature consoled and inspired him,” Hill says. “He always told his students at the camp ‘don't just look at the dust on the ground, look beyond.’”

After a little over a year in the camp, the Obatas were released to wait out the rest of the war in St. Louis. In 1945, Obata resumed his position at the University of California, where he taught until retiring as professor emeritus in 1954, the same year he became a naturalized citizen of the United States. True to his Zen-inspired philosophy, he kept working for

**FROM THE DEEP IMPRESSION OF MY EXPERIENCE  
THERE SPRINGS AN EMOTION WHICH OTHERS MAY  
NOT UNDERSTAND. —CHIURA OBATA**

the next 15 years, lecturing throughout California and giving demonstrations on Japanese brush painting. He died in 1975 at the age of 90, but his art lives on. The exhibitions of his work have continued over the years—one of the most recent at the Smithsonian American Art Museum last year—inspiring people to appreciate the world around them and to find the bigger world he, himself, searched for. Hill says that is what her grandfather would want, recalling her surprise in talking with some of his students and finding that what they most remembered him for wasn't his art techniques. “What they remembered was his teaching them how to look at the world and see the beauty of nature, and how to interpret that nature in artwork. That was his big message.”

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**LEFT:** *Great Nature, Storm on Mount Lyell from Johnson Peak*, color woodblock print, 1930. “Mount Lyell stands majestically, 13,650 feet high, clad in brilliant snow and towering over the high peaks of the Sierra—Tioga Peak, Mount Dana, Ragged Peak, Johnson Peak, Unicorn Peak, and Mount San Joaquin, which surround her. The spotlessly clear blue sky that sweeps high up over the mountains changes in a moment to a furious black color. Clouds call clouds. Pealing thunder shrieks and roars across the black heavens. Man stands awestruck in the face of the great change of wondrous nature.” —Chiura Obata

# ARTI FACT

## Mythic Footsteps



**JUST 12 MILES FROM THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY STANDS** “the best tree-lovers monument that could possibly be found in all the forests of the world,” John Muir once said, where sequoias soar almost 300 feet into the sky. Muir Woods National Monument, named for the famed naturalist, might not exist at all if not for conservationist William Kent’s love of the magnificent specimens, the oldest of which is over 1,200 years old. A recent study of the monument—written by John Auwaerter and John F. Sears for Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation—details how the California congressman kept the 612-acre Redwood Canyon from becoming a public reservoir by donating it to the federal government. **ALTHOUGH KENT HAD ACQUIRED THE TRACT IN 1905**, it was still threatened by eminent domain. A few years later, Frederick E. Olmsted suggested it could become a national monument under the recently passed Antiquities Act. And just one month after that, on January 9, 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt signed a proclamation declaring 295 acres, the property’s core, as the Muir Woods National Monument. **THE PRESIDENT WANTED TO NAME IT FOR KENT**, who demurred in the name of the great naturalist. Muir wrote to him: “You have made yourself immortal like your sequoias and all the best people of the world will call you blessed.” Not only did Kent and his wife become the first citizens to donate land for a monument, he also helped develop rail access to make it easier to visit the site, and played a crucial role in the early years of its management. **IN 1916, KENT INTRODUCED THE BILL** establishing the National Park Service, which took responsibility for the monument’s care. He once said: “Live and let live, say the redwoods. Sun, air, water, soil, and shade for all.” Today, Muir Woods National Monument amazes almost a million visitors each year. **THE REPORT IS ONLINE AT** [www.nps.gov/muwo/historyculture/upload/muwo-hsr2006.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/muwo/historyculture/upload/muwo-hsr2006.pdf)

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BURNING BUS, ANNISTON, ALABAMA, MAY 14, 1961, FROM "COUNTER REVOLUTION," PAGE 4. JOSEPH POSTIGLIONE/COURTESY HIGH MUSEUM OF ART

